
City moves forward on redevelopment plans

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The Lewisville City Council recently approved a resolution that will redefine the look and concept of Old Town.

Lewisville is working on three projects centered on Old Town. The projects include a plan for the Old Town transit oriented development (TOD), Mill Street's urban design and landscape improvements and the Old Town plaza and pedestrian improvements.

"This plan is not set in stone. It is a guide to move us forward," said Nika Reinecke, director of economic development and planning. "However, we do need to have a plan to go by to take to the developers."

For the past year, the city staff has worked with public stakeholders to generate design alternatives for a plan to improve pedestrian pathways, landscaping, circulation and land use TOD district surrounding the Old Town commuter rail station and the Mill Street corridor. The plans lay out a strategy to improve connectivity, streetscape character and spur private development.

The final Old Town TOD plan includes 28 acres of commercial development concentrated in Old Town Center and the Old Town rail station. There were several critical factors to completing a successful development plan including designing an implementable plan, creating an environment where residents can live without reliance on a vehicle, utilizing public investment, helping Lewisville obtain grant funds and providing sufficient traffic control from nearby landfills and concrete companies. The plan is anticipated to increase population by roughly 5,400 residents at full implementation.

Through several meetings with various stakeholders and input from Lewisville residents, a preferred alternative plan was presented to and approved by council members. The new plan includes office and retail space that will support job creation, mixed-use and commercial use areas that are separated from a smaller food, beverage and entertainment use area and there is a diversity of housing throughout the plan.

The preferred plan also includes multiple parks, which will provide open space and recreational opportunities for residents. Three key project opportunities were identified catalysts for the redevelopment of Old Town. The preferred plan takes advantage of city owned property with the placement of townhomes near the soon-to-be completed arts center. The southern end of Elm Street provides sufficient room to encourage redevelopment of shopping centers complete with a park providing a buffer between shopping areas and the townhomes. Finally, the plan provides for a greater use of the Old Town rail station.

The final Mill Street corridor plan, which coincides with the Old Town plaza and pedestrian improvements, offers a phased approach to improve circulation and streetscape and includes improvements to existing infrastructures. The vision of the Mill Street plan is to reinvent the area as a pedestrian friendly and safe streetscape.

City staff, along with stakeholders, developed several objectives relating to the redesign of Mill Street. The group wanted the redesign to reduce vehicular speeds, create a streetscape safe for both pedestrian and vehicular circulation, provide the streetscape amenities necessary to provide

a comfortable pedestrian experience, create a gateway corridor into Old Town, provide vegetation to add visual interest, utilize existing public realm and street dimensions to minimize cost of purchasing additional right-of way, provide clear and attractive signage and make Mill Street a viable corridor to access the Old Town and the TOD. "Mill Street plays a vital role in the character of Old Town," Reinecke said. "While we need to come to a concrete decision about the redevelopment plans, all options are open and can be revisited."

The Lewisville City Council will continue to work with the city staff on the three projects that will drastically change the look and feel of Old Town Lewisville.